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Bibliophile Corner

THE HERODIAN DYNASTY

By Frederic Madden
(Excerpt from History of Jewish Coinage, 1864)

ANTIPATER

The peace that had been founded between the two Hasmonean brothers was only too soon destroyed. The Idumaean Antipater, father of Herod I., wishing to acquire the friendship of the weak-minded Hyrcanus II., persuaded him that his brother intended to put him to death, and ultimately induced him to fly from Jerusalem, and take refuge with Aretas, the king of Nabathaea. Aretas in consequence invaded Judaea. Aristobulus was defeated and besieged in Jerusalem, and the city would doubtless have been taken had not Scaurus and Gabinius, Pompey's lieutenants, whose assistance Aristobulus had purchased, arrived at the scene of action and compelled Aretas to raise the siege. In B.C. 63 Pompey himself arrived in Judaea, and the rival brothers laid their claims before him. Pompey declared in favour of Hyrcanus; for he saw, in this weak prince, the surest means of sooner or later getting possession of Judaea for the Romans. Aristobulus and his sons, Alexander II. and Antigonus, were carried away to Rome. After this victory Hyrcanus was reinstated in the nominal sovereignty and High-Priesthood, having Antipater the Idumaean placed over him, to watch the interest of the Romans.

Roman denarius struck in 58 B.C. by Scaurus commemorates defeat of King Aretas.

HEROD I. SURNAMED THE GREAT
B.C. 37–B.C. 4

Immediately on ascending the throne, after the death of Antigonus, Herod put to death all the members of the Sanhedrin , excepting Pollio and Sameas. The aged Hyrcanus, his wife Mariamne, to whom he was passionately attached, and many other members of his family were also put to death; and the High-Priesthood was given to an ignorant and obscure man from Babylon, named Ananel. Though Herod did not win the love of his subjects by his acts at home, he greatly improved his dominions. Yet this was done more with the idea of pleasing Rome than of pleasing his subjects. The beautiful Temple, commenced in the eighteenth year of his reign (B.C. 20), failed to gratify the people. On his deathbed he ordered that some of the principal Jews, whom he had shut up in the Hippodrome at Jericho, should be put to death after his decease, that mourners might not be wanting at his funeral. About the same time he ordered the massacre of the infants at Bethlehem (Matt. 2:16). Thus exasperated by endless atrocities the people would have openly revolted, had not Herod died, aged 69, in the year B.C. 4.

From the large extent of Herod's dominions, and the immense wealth that he bequeathed to his kindred and to strangers, we whould naturally expect to find a very numerous and fine coinage. Though Josephus says that he left to his sister Salome five hundred thousand [pieces] of *silver that was coined,* and to Caesar, besides vessels of gold and silver, ten millions of *coined silver,* and to others five millions, yet from numismatic evidence we must conclude that the coinage of gold was prohibited in all countries subject to the Romans, and that the permission to strike silver was only granted to some of the most important cities, as Alexandria, Antioch of Syria, Caesarea of Cappadocia, Tarsus, etc. Pompey had already forbidden a silver coinage to be struck in most of the Phoenician mints, only a *copper currency* was to be employed. So in Judaea we find a *copper coinage* only from the time of the taking of Jerusalem by Pompey, excepting in the time of the two revolts, when the Jews again stuck *silver coins* for a short time. All the copper coins

struck by Herod I. had *Greek* inscriptions only, and no Hebrew. Their types, for the most part, present symbols connected with the service of God, or are borrowed from some of the Hasmonean coins, for all images of living creatures were forbidden by the Jews. There are no coins with the title *Great* belonging to Herod I., though Ewald has supposedd that the origin of this surname may have been derived from the coins, and is only intended to mean *elder*, to distinguish him from the younger Herod (Antipas).

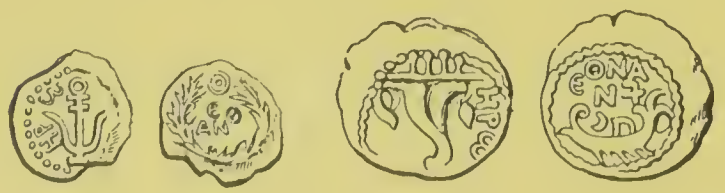
Coin of the Month

This small bronze lepton is the most common coin issued by Herod the Great. The obverse features an anchor surrounded by a Greek inscription BACI HPWΔ (King Herod); the reverse shows, a caduceus inbetween two cornucopiae.

HEROD ARCHELAUS
B.C. 4–A.D. 6

Herod Archelaus, the son of Herod I. and Malthace, had, by a first will, been disinherited; but in the final arrangement he was left the 'kingdom' which had previously been assigned to his elder brother Antipas. Archelaus would not accept the title of 'king,' though saluted as such by the army, until that title should be confirmed by Augustus. He therefore set out for Rome, and was appointed by Augustus *Ethnarch* (or Ruler of the nation), and Judaea, Samaria, Idumaea, and several cities were apportioned to him, with a promise that, if he reigned virtuously, the title of King might be conferred upon him. He, however, following in the steps of his father, committing many cruel deeds, and violating the Jewish laws, caused the Jews to complain loudly of his tyranny. Augustus at last paid attention to their frequent murmurs, and Archelaus was summoned to Rome, and (A.D. 6) banished to Vienna, in Gaul, where he died. His dominions were confiscated, and attached to the Roman Empire, to be administered by Procurators.

Archelaus is the only prince of Judaea who bore the title of *Ethnarch*, coins can be attributed to him with certainty. He also styles himself only 'Herod' on the coins. The types are somewhat similar to those of his father, and of some of the Hasmonean princes.



These bronze coins of Herod Archelaus feature the name "Herod" in Greek on the obverse, and his title "Ethnarch" on the reverse.

HEROD ANTIPAS
B.C. 4–A.D. 39

Herod Antipas was son of Herod the Great by Malthace, a Samaritan. Though 'the kingdom' had been originally left to him, yet in the final arrangement of Herod's will, he was named 'Tetrarch of Galilee and Peraea.' He was first married to the daughter of Aretas, king of Arabia Petra, but while on a visit to his half-brother Philip I. he persuaded his wife Herodias to marry him, thus violating the Jewish law. Upon this Aretas invaded the dominions of Antipas and defeated him with great loss. His government appears to have been milder than that of his brother Archelaus, of whom Joseph was afraid, and 'turned aside into Galilee,' (Matt. 2:22) though the Evangelists designate him as cruel, tyrannical, and unscrupulous (see Matt. 14:9, Luke 3:19, and Luke 13:31). He enlarged and adorned several places in his dominions, restoring Sepphoris and Betharamptha, and founded a city on the Lake of Gennesareth, which he called *Tiberias*, in honour of the Emperor Tiberius, with whom he was in great favour. After the death of Tiberius in A.D. 38, and the accession of Caius, he was persuaded by Herodias to go to Rome to obtain the title of King. His nephew, Agrippa I., who was much esteemed by Caius, opposed this request, and accused him of treacherous correspondence with the Parthians. He was consequently exiled to Lugdunum in Gaul (A.D. 39), and eventually died in Spain. His wife Herodias voluntarily shared his exile, and his dominions were given to Agrippa I.

This large bronze of Antipas is inscribed "Herod Tetrarch" and indicates the mint in the Judaean city of "Tiberias."

HEROD PHILIP II
B.C. 4–A.D. 34

Philip II was the son of Herod I. and Cleopatra. and received as his share of the kingdom the tetrarchies of Auranitis, Batanea, and Trachonitis, with certain parts about Jamnia. He is only mentioned once in the New Testament (Luke 3:1), and must not be confused with Herod Philip I. the son of Herod I. and a second Mariamne, the daughter of Simon the High-Priest. He was married to Salome, the daughter of Herod Philip I. and Herodias. He built the city of Caesarea Paneas, more commonly known as Caesarea Philippi, (refer to Matt. 16:13, Mark 8:27) and bestowed the name of *Julias* upon the town of Bethsaida in Lower Gaulonitis. He here built a fine monument, in which his remains were deposited after his death. He enjoyed a reign of 37 years (B.C. 4–A.D. 34), and showed himself to be a person of moderation and quietness in the conduct of his life and government, always living in the country, and ruling with equity and mildness. As he left no children, Tiberius transferred his principality to the Roman province of Syria.

Issued by Philip II in a non-Jewish area, this bronze coin features a portrait of the Emperor Tiberius along with a Roman temple.

HEROD AGRIPPA I.
A.D. 37—A.D. 44

Agrippa I. was the son of Aristobulus and Berenice, and grandson of Herod the Great. He passed his early life in pleasure and debauchery, as companion of Drusus, the son of Tiberius, and the future Emperor Claudius. His extravagance soon caused him great embarrassment, and through his sister Herodias, the second wife of Herod Antipas, he obtained the appointment of governor of the city of Tiberias. He soon quarrelled with Antipas, and after many adventures arrived at Rome, where he was favourably received by the Emperor Tiberius. He there formed a close intimacy with Caius (Caligula). One day whilst riding with Caius, he expressed a wish that the latter might soon succeed to the throne. This was reported to Tiberius, who threw him into prison, where he remained til the death of the Emperor, A.D. 37. Caius on his accession immediately released him, and gave him the tetrarchy of Philip, which had since A.D. 34 belonged to Rome. Whilst Agrippa was on his way to take possession of his new kingdom, Antipas hastened to Rome to ask for himself likewise the title of 'King.' This however was prevented by Agrippa, and Antipas, instead of gaining the royal title, was sent into exile at Lyons, and his principality of Galilee and Peraea was given to Agrippa. After the death of Caius, Claudius continued to Agrippa the same marks of favour, and enlarged his dominions still further by giving him Judaea and Samaria, and also the tetrarchy of Lysanias II. His possessions were now as large as those of his grandfather, Herod I.

Agrippa I. was universally popular with the Jews, for he loved to live at Jerusalem, and was a strict observer of the laws of his country, which accounts for his persecution of the Christians. He alson conferred benefits on several cities by enlarging them, and building amphitheatres, and instituting games. During one of these at Caesarea Palestinae, he was suddenly seized with violent internal pains, for not rebuking the people who had saluted him as a God, and he died five days after, A.D. 44. Agrippa I. is called 'Herod the King.' in the Acts (Acts 12).

There is only one type of the coins of Agrippa I. that may be considered purely Jewish, though there are several bearing profane types. It is found very frequently at Jerusalem, and was from that circumstance most probably struck there.

Portrait of Agrippa I
38/39 A.D.

"Jewish-type"
42/43 A.D.

HEROD, KING OF CHALCIS
A.D. 41—A.D. 48

Herod, king of Chalcis, was the son of Aristobulus and Berenice, and the brother of Herod Agrippa I. At the request of Agrippa I., he obtained from Claudius the small kingdom of Chalcis, and, after the death of his brother, Claudius gave him the authority over the temple, the money of the sacred treasure, and the choice of the High-Priest. He died in A.D. 48, and his small kingdom was given by Claudius to his nephew Herod Agrippa II.

Though Herod Chalcis exercised a certain authority over Jerusalem, he has left no numismatic traces of it. All his coins belong to the country of Chalcis, which Ptolemy, son of Mannaeus, Lysanias, and Zenodorus had possessed as tetrarchs, and they have therefore no place in a work treating especially of the coins of the princes and cities of Judaea.

AGRIPPA II.
A.D. 48—A.D. 100

Agrippa II. was the son of Herod Agrippa I. and Cypros. At his father's death in A.D. 44 he was only seventeen years of age, and in consequence, Claudius, thinking that he was too young to govern, sent Cuspius Fadus as procurator. In A.D. 48 Herod king of Chalcis died, and Agrippa was appointed by Claudius as his uncle Herod's successor. Some years after, Claudius took it away from him, giving him instead the tetrarchies of Philip II. and Lysanias, including Batanea, Trachonitis, Auranitis, and Abilene, with the title of King (Acts 25:13, 26:2). In A.D. 55 Nero gave him the cities of Tiberias and Taricheae in Galilee, and Julias, a city of Peraea, with fourteen villages near it.

Agrippa II. much inlarged the city of Caesarea Philippi, calling it *Neronias*, in honour of the emperor Nero, a fact also confirmed by his coins. He however made himself very unpopular by spending money in improving Jerusalem and Berytus, and transferring to these places almost everything that was ornamental in his own kingdom. About the year A.D. 60, Agrippa II. and his sister Berenice paid a visit to the Roman governor Festus at Caesarea, who, knowing that Agrippa was better acquainted than himself with matters relating to the Jewish Law, recounted to him the case of the apostle Paul. In consequence, Agrippa expressed a desire to see him, and a day having been fixed for the interview, Agrippa and Bèrenice with their suite entered the audience chamber with great pomp. Paul then made his speech to Agrippa, but his words only called forth the ironical and contemptuous answer, "Thou wilt soon persuade me to be a Christian," an answer which Paul accepted as sincere, and to which he replied, "I would to God that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds" (Acts 26:29).

At the commencement of the war with the Romans, Agrippa used all his eloquence to dissuade the Jews from fighting, and his speech is given at some length by Josephus, with whom he appears to have been on intimate terms;he eventually sided with the Romans and was wounded by a sling-stone at the siege of Gamala. When Jerusalem was taken and the war ended, he retired to Rome with his sister, and there died, aged 70, in the third year of the Emperor Trajan (A.D. 100). He was the last Jewish prince of the Herodian line.

Portrait of Herod of Chalcis on rare bronze coin, 43 A.D.

Portrait of Agrippa II, struck in 66 A.D.

HADRIAN'S VISIT TO JUDAEA

By Mel Wacks

The Roman Emperor P. Aelius Hadrian was an inveterate traveller, visiting all parts of his empire, from Britain to Thebes in Egypt, from Mauritania to the Danube. In 130 C. E. Hadrain travelled from Arabia, across Judaea, to Egypt. The following year he again visited Judaea.

The purpose of the Roman Emperor making these numerous trips was to ensure the security of the frontiers of his Empire and to set up necessary public works. The large number of engineers, surveyors and other experts who accompanied Hadrian enabled the rapid planning and building of aquaducts, theaters, streets, ramparts and so on. The title, "Restitutor," found on many of Hadrian's coins was fully earned.

After his beneficient visit to Petra, the capitol of Nabataean Arabia (Judaea's southeastern neighbor) the city was renamed Hadriana Petra.

The Judaean cities—Gaza, Caesarea and Tiberias benefited from Hadrian's construction program. And the greatest challenge was the rebuilding of Jerusalem, which had been razed sixty years before at the climax of the First Revolt. Orders were given to rebuild the city completely . . . even the 2,000 year old name was changed to Colonia Aelia Capitolinus. In keeping with the Hellenization of the Jewish Holy City, Hadrian planned to construct a Roman Temple on the site of the razed Jewish Temple. This destroyed the hope of the Jews that their Temple would be restored, and was one of the primary causes of the new uprising led by Simon Bar Kochba in 132 C.E.

Coins were issued commemorating Hadrian's visits to Egypt, Macedonia, Spain, etc. and Judaea was no exception.

Bronze coins were struck in several varieties and denominations which show Hadrian attending a sacrificial ceremony in Judaea.

A Sestertius shows Hadrian standing to the right before a female (Judaea allegory) who holds a patera and a box, between them is an altar. On either side of the woman there is a child holding a palm branch. A bull is shown standing in front of the altar.

The sacrifice was the main part of the religious ceremonies of the ancients. For blood-offerings, cattle, goats, sheep and pigs were used. If the creature voluntarily followed to the altar or even bowed its head, it was considered to be a favorable sign. Both of these favorable attitudes can be found on the Adventui Judaea coins.

While sheep and cattle could be offered to many of the gods, at Rome there were special regulations with respect to the victims appropriate to the different divinities. The specified offering for Jupiter was a young steer of a white color, or at least with a white spot on its forehead. This scene was historically significant since the city of Jerusalem had been renamed, in part, for the god Jupiter Capitolinus and Hadrian had made his intention clear to erect a temple to Jupiter on the site of the Jewish Temple.

The altar, which is shown foreshortened in the background, is actually quite tall—about twice as high as the bull standing directly in front of it. The height of altars was proportional to the importance of the god being honored, and Jupiter was the chief of the gods in Roman mythology.

Hadrian is wearing a toga, a symbol of peace which was worn principally for certain ceremonial rites such as the founding of towns, during incantations, at the opening of a temple, and at various sacrificial observances.

With a scroll in his left hand and his right hand raised, the Emperor appears to be making a proclamation . . . could it be the Hellenizing of Jerusalem that preceded the revolt? or that followed the defeat of the Jews?

Unlike the female representation, who represents the Jewish country, shown weeping on the Judaea Capta coins following the First Revolt (c, 70 C. E.), the woman on Hadrian's Adventui Judaea coins was evidently meant to illustrate the successful Hellenization of Judaea.

Similarly, the children probably represent the restoration of the population via new (non-Jewish) colonists.

The woman is holding a patera in her outstretched right hand to the Emperor. The patera was a broad, flat dish or saucer used by the ancients for offering libations. The patera was made of earthenware or metal (gold, silver or bronze). The allegorical female figure holds a box in her left hand. A similar representation can be seen in a Roman relief portraying a sacrificial attendant. These symbols—the patera and sacrificial box—would hardly be used by a member of the Jewish faith.

The palm branches held by the children were used in religious processions; they symbolize dignity, royal honor, jubilation and/or victory.

The themes included in the Hadrian Adventui Judaea coins have encouraged speculation as to whether they were minted following the Bar Revolt to commemorate the Roman victory or proceding the outbreak, commemorating the Hellenization of Judaea. No final answer can yet be given.

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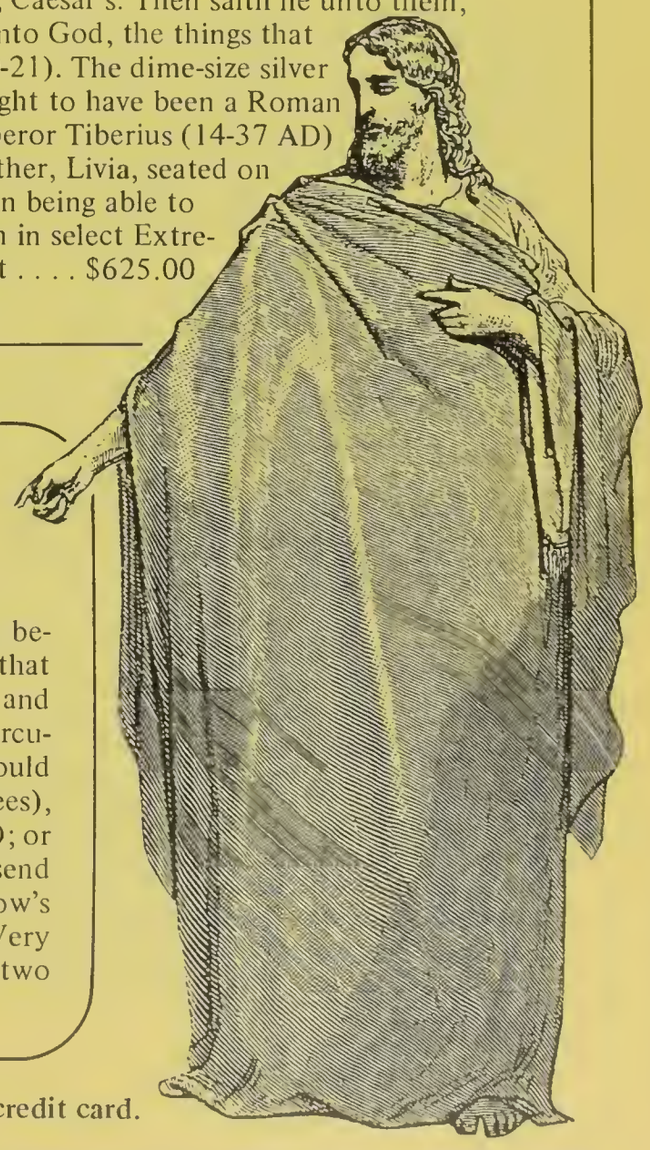

"WIDOW'S MITE" (BRONZE LEPTON OF THE HASMONEANS, HERODIANS OR PROCURATORS)

It is written that, "Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury and many that were rich cast in much. And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites" (Mark 12:41-42). Since coins usually circulated for hundreds of years in ancient times, these "mites" could have been either bronze prutahs of the Hasmoneans (Maccabees), 135-37 BC; Herodians, 37 BC - 6 AD; or the Procurators, 6-31 AD. We will send you one of these possible "Widow's Mites" in above average Fine to Very Fine condition for only $40, or two different for just $75.

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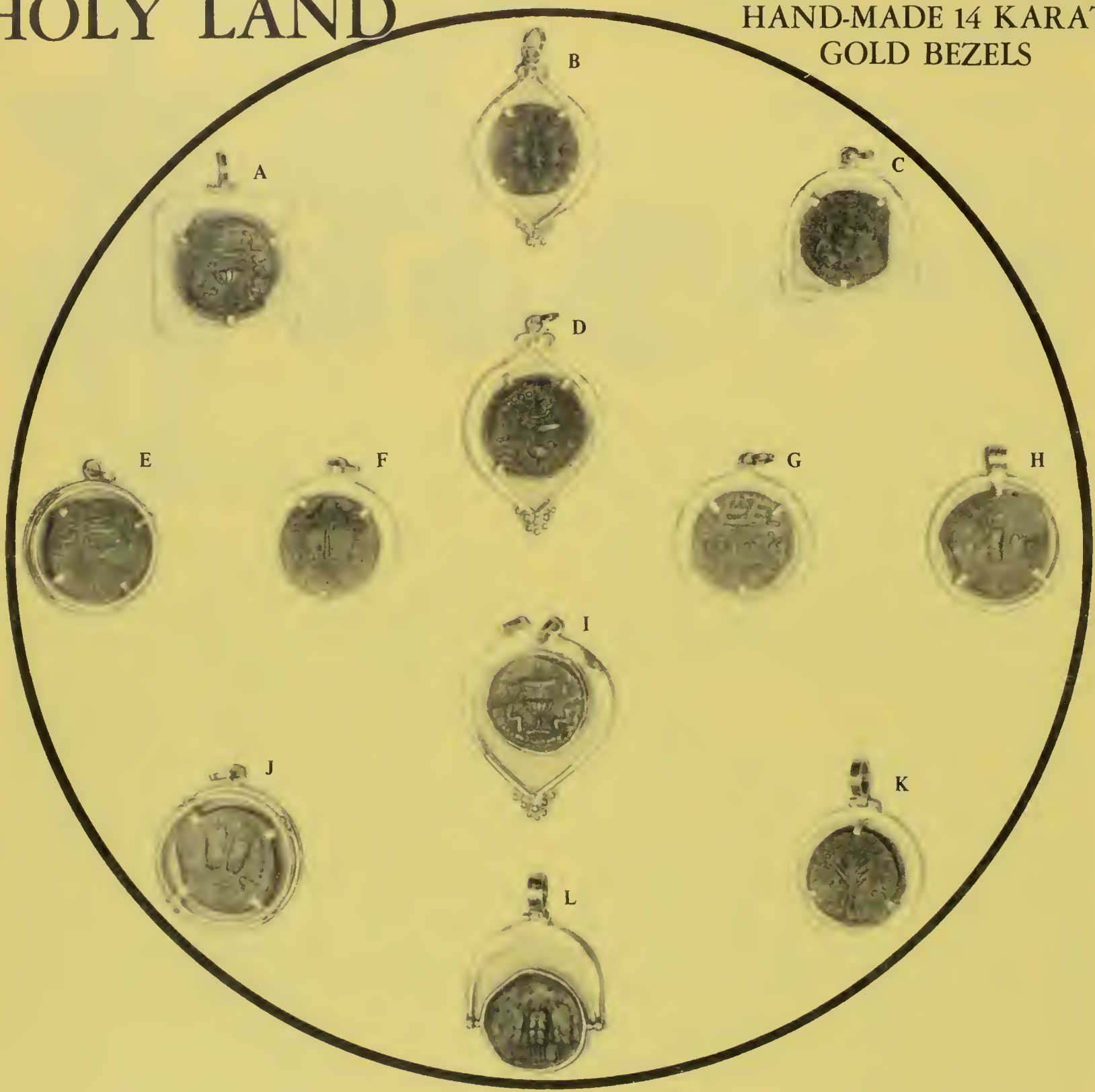

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